United Nations A/C.1/58/PV.11

General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

First Committee

11th meeting

Monday, 20 October 2003, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: I would like to reiterate that, during this stage of our work, a certain degree of flexibility will be maintained, as in previous sessions of the First Committee. In accordance with the decisions on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee, this phase of the Committee's work will combine the discussion of specific subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions. Members may recall that document A/C.1/58/CRP.2, containing subjects for the thematic discussions, was circulated last week.

I wish to inform the Committee that a delegation that was unable to meet the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions due to difficulties in communication with its capital approached me last Thursday to request permission to still submit its draft resolution under agenda item 74 (b), entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa". Consequently, I would like to ask for the Committee's consent in accepting that belated draft resolution. I would like to stress, however, that this would be an exceptional case. May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: Although the specific subject for today's thematic discussion is nuclear weapons, I would first, with members' consent, like to give the floor to Ambassador García Moritán of Argentina and other delegations that wish to make brief statements on the work of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I extend to you, Sir, our very special congratulations on your election to preside over this session of our Committee. We are convinced that, under your leadership, this body will be able to conclude its work with the utmost efficiency.

I am pleased to introduce the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, submitted pursuant to the mandate in resolution 57/75 on transparency in armaments. The report is contained in document A/58/274, circulated by the Secretariat for the information of all delegations.

The General Assembly specifically requested the Group of Governmental Experts to study the operation of this important confidence-building mechanism, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and the work of other bodies, including the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, with a view to producing a balanced

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

03-57591 (E)

evaluation of the operation of that significant tool, designed to enhance transparency and contribute to confidence-building among States.

The exercise, which has proved to be very stimulating from the personal standpoint, has not been easy. In the course of three meetings, the experts analysed a large volume of documentation and information accumulated in recent years and evaluated in broad terms the various subject areas, exploring possible solutions and proposing practical suggestions without losing sight of the political circumstances surrounding the Register.

The work was particularly intensive. The experts, bringing vast technical expertise and diplomatic skills to the task, agreed that the existence of the mechanism, as an integral part of international efforts to enhance transparency, is essential in order to prevent a destabilizing arms build-up, ease tensions and promote restrictions on arms transfers. This affirmation of its potential is reflected with adequate clarity throughout the report.

Allow me briefly to single out some of the relevant points in our deliberations, conclusions and recommendations.

The ad hoc Group discussed all the statements submitted by individual Governments over the past few years. It was noted that the level of participation had grown significantly over the years. For example, in 2001 reports were submitted by 126 Governments. To date, 164 Member States have submitted statements, even if only once, since the establishment of the Register. I wish to emphasize the importance of all the statements, including those made by States that have nothing particular to declare. I should like to invite Governments that find themselves in such a situation to continue to submit statements, since, from the standpoint of the Register, theirs have the same weight as other statements and amount to an important political gesture that needs to be maintained.

The report of the Group of Experts contains a number of graphs which illustrate that point with precision and in various geographical areas. A reading of the report will reveal the degree of success achieved by this voluntary instrument of international information. Of course, however, the ideal of universal participation has not yet been reached. That goal is achievable and we are heading in the right direction. The various seminars held, thanks to the generous contribution of certain members, have been of major importance in securing broader participation. In expressing gratitude for those contributions, I should like to urge that such seminars be continued. I also want to thank the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs for its inputs to the seminars and to the workshops held at the regional disarmament centres.

Conventional wisdom has shown that statistics can lead to different and even opposite conclusions. Such is the size of the Register today, however, that it can be said to cover most of the world arms trade in the seven categories of conventional arms, given that almost all the suppliers and recipients of those arms submit reports on a regular basis. I would say that 95 per cent of such trade is reflected in the Register. That statistic alone conveys the importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, without the need for hyperbole or superlatives.

The original resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, resolution 46/36 L, incorporated a dynamic process for considering, when appropriate, the expansion and adjustment of the seven categories of equipment and material. Since that time, successive attempts have been made that have turned out to be particularly successful in the case of the Group of Experts, over which I have had the honour to preside this year.

Accordingly, after a thorough, extensive and detailed analysis of the seven categories, it was agreed to reduce the threshold to 75 millimetres for the artillery systems in category III and to include man-portable air defence systems in category VII. These are two decisions of particular technical and political importance, and of particular multilateral significance as well. I would recall that the ad hoc Group, in considering the lowering of the threshold for category III, also debated the option of a 35-millimetre calibre.

The consideration of that question led to a discussion of the measures to enhance transparency with respect to small arms and light weapons. In that context, the Group took note of the important efforts that had been made at the world, regional and subregional levels with respect to small arms and light weapons and, in particular, the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The success achieved on this occasion has not, in my opinion, brought sufficient progress. Much is possible and much is politically and technically feasible. The updating of the Register initiated in 2003 needs to be continued. Many of the substantive considerations and proposed elements are reflected in the report of the Group of Experts and may be discussed in future revisions of the Register. It is very important — indeed, I would say crucial — for the instrument to be updated from the scientific and technical standpoints and for it to reflect modern military concepts. Obsolescence is a danger to be avoided if we want this confidence-building system to be meaningful and relevant at the political and military levels. I am sure that no one wants to have a Register of equipment that has been eclipsed by technological progress or overtaken by the emergence of new concepts affecting the description of each of the categories as originally defined.

I am equally sure that, after the current successful experience, it is possible to update the rest of the categories. For example, category II could include capabilities related to reconnaissance and electronic warfare. In category IV, adjustments could and should be made in relation to military aircraft — for example, the inclusion of force multipliers, command of troops and force-projection capabilities such as air-to-air refuelling and aircraft designed to perform military transport and airdrop missions. Category V could, I think, undergo adjustments in relation to combat support systems — for example, target acquisition, including anti-submarine warfare, communications, command of troops, mine-laying missions or military transport tasks. In category VI, I am sure that tonnage could be lowered to 400 metric tons and to 50 metric tons in the case of submarines.

The report awaits the Committee's consideration and speaks for itself. It is the fruit of consensus among a substantial number of eminent experts whom I have had the honour to coordinate over the past few months. I wish to extend my appreciation to the Secretariat and in particular to Mr. Nazir Kernel. We have done our utmost to carry out the instructions of the General Assembly in the best possible manner. We have adjusted two categories and, I think, prepared the way for future adjustments to the Register.

The Register of Conventional Arms is a practical instrument and remains unique in the sphere of confidence-building. I am convinced that time will show how useful and, most importantly, how significant it can become in our efforts to promote peace and security in the world. The report is an important step in that direction.

Mr. Donowaki (Japan): I wish to thank you, Sir, for allowing me to take the floor at this time to speak, on behalf of the delegation of Japan, on the report of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, contained in the Secretary-General's report in document A/58/274. Japan has been one of the strongest supporters of the Register from the time of its establishment.

By establishing the Register in 1992, Member States of the United Nations agreed for the first time in the history of disarmament to go transparent about their international transfer of major conventional arms by submitting data to the Register annually. In that way, unwarranted suspicions and fears among States may be reduced and mutual trust and confidence promoted. The Register was established as a global instrument for transparency and confidence-building.

As the Register marked 10 years of operation last year, it was encouraging to note that the number of participating States — which averaged about 94 for the first eight years — jumped to 118 in the ninth year, 2000, and 126 in the tenth year, 2001. Over those 10 years, more than 160 States have reported to the Register at least once, demonstrating that a growing majority of States support that global transparency and confidence-building instrument.

Also, the quality of data submitted to the Register improved considerably. Of course, since it is not a legally-binding instrument, the submission of data is voluntary. Still, the Register managed to capture the great bulk of global trade in seven categories of major conventional arms because almost all significant suppliers and recipients of such arms submit data regularly. According to some estimates, more than 95 per cent in monetary value of such trade is reported to the Register every year. As a matter of fact, the success in this regard is owed not a little to the United States of America, which exports about half of all such arms and regularly reports to the Register about such trade.

The quality of data submitted to the Register improved also because of the fact that most of the Member States started to fill in the so-called remarks column, with the model and types of arms transferred

on a voluntary-voluntary basis. Thus, the accuracy of data submitted to the Register improved significantly.

It was on the basis of this encouraging trend of growing support for and value of the Register that the Group of Governmental Experts met for its periodic review this year. The task of the Group was to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and on its further development. As was pointed out by the Secretary-General in his statement in August last year celebrating the Register's tenth anniversary, how to increase the Register's relevance in all subregions and thereby facilitate greater participation was one of the major questions that had to be addressed by the Group. From that viewpoint, technical adjustments to the agreed categories of weapons systems needed to be considered.

In response to such an expectation, this year's Group of Governmental Experts came up with a recommendation for technical adjustments in two of the seven categories covered by the Register. The report containing this recommendation was approved by consensus in the Group. Technical adjustment of the categories was what the Group of Governmental Experts had attempted every time in the past — in 1994, 1997 and 2000 — but without a success. Therefore, this was an outstanding achievement.

Success this time did not come easily, but was made possible as a result of intensive debate among the members of the Group and thanks to the spirit of flexibility and compromise demonstrated by them, as well as by the Governments they represented. Also, it should be stressed very strongly that the Group was fortunate to have had the highly-qualified Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina, who just spoke, as its Chairman. Under his able and experienced guidance, the Group could efficiently carry out its work with a remarkable success.

The technical adjustments recommended in the Group's report are, first, to lower the calibre of large-calibre artillery systems from 100 millimetres to 75 millimetres and, secondly, to include man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) as a new sub-category to missile and missile launchers. By lowering the calibre of artilleries, some of the light weapons, such as 81-millimetre and 82-millimetre mortars, actually used in regional conflicts — in Africa, for example — will be covered, making the Register more relevant to some regions or subregions. By including MANPADS, the misuse of which by terrorists has become a matter of global concern since the incident of 11 September 2001, the Register will be made more relevant to all regions.

Of course, the addition of those weapon systems to the Register would not put an end to the illicit trafficking in such weapons, because the Register requires only official transfers of such weapons to be reported as transparency- and confidence-building measures. Nevertheless, their inclusion should have the effect of further discouraging the illicit trafficking in such weapons.

In this connection, since both lower-calibre artilleries and MANPADS belong to the category of small arms and light weapons, the relationship between the Register and small arms and light weapons in general was discussed extensively by the Group of Governmental Experts. The Group noted the significant efforts made by the Member States in this regard through the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001 and recognized the need

> "to encourage regions to develop, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, measures to enhance transparency with a view to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (*A/CONF.192/15, part II, para. 31*),

as stated in the Programme of Action.

> Therefore, the Group came to recommend that
>
> "interested Member States in a position to do so, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, provide additional information on transfers of small arms and light weapons made or modified to military specification and intended for military use" (*A/58/274, para 113 (e)*)

and that, where national, subregional and regional mechanisms exist, use should be made of those reporting methods. In addition to the two recommendations related to technical adjustments, that was the third important recommendation included in the report of the Group this year.

I may add that this year's report gives special recognition to the value of regional workshops in promoting the Register, organized by some Member

States in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Five such workshops held between 2001 and 2003 — in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Accra, Ghana; Windhoek, Namibia; Lima, Peru; and Bali, Indonesia — are mentioned in detail. As one of the co-sponsors of those workshops, Japan feels grateful for this recognition.

It should be mentioned that this year's Group did not succeed in solving all the issues they considered, which unfortunately was inevitable. For example, there was no agreement on technical adjustments to reflect the latest developments in some of the weapons systems or on the expansion of the scope of the Register by covering national holding and procurement on the same basis as international transfers. Similarly, the low level of participation in some subregions of tension, where the security concerns of States may prevent them from taking a positive attitude to the Register, remains an issue for further consideration.

However, in spite of some remaining issues, what has been achieved so far is a valuable asset of us all and well deserves to be consolidated and strengthened. The report of this year's Group containing technical adjustments for the first time marks a major step forward in further strengthening the Register. Therefore, the report of this year's Group deserves to be endorsed by the General Assembly and implemented. I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the delegation of the Netherlands for introducing a draft resolution for that purpose, as it has been doing over the years. Japan, together with a large number of Member States in support of the Register, will give its full support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): I am pleased to speak today in support of strengthening the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms.

The Group of Governmental Experts has spent many months consulting and considering ways to enhance the effectiveness of the Register as a confidence-building measure and to make it more relevant to key regions of the world. Canada provided one of the experts and was pleased to have made a contribution in this regard.

With the establishment of the Register, United Nations Member States demonstrated that they recognized the value of openness and transparency in military affairs as a precondition for security. This year's Group of Experts considered how to universalize the Register and how to make it more relevant as a confidence-building measure. Canada supports their findings.

On universalization, the Group agreed that more work was required to convince countries to submit annual reports, even if those would be nil reports. It was agreed that United Nations Member States should be encouraged to file a report each year and should nominate a national point of contact to coordinate reporting.

On the question of coverage, the Group learned that the calibre threshold for the artillery systems covered by the existing Register was too high to include most of the systems actually used in conflict zones in parts of Africa, as well as Central America. Therefore, the report recommends lowering the threshold for reporting from 100 millimetres to 75 millimetres.

The Group of Governmental Experts also looked at expanding the conventional weapons covered in the Register. The Canadian expert was among those who argued for the inclusion of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). As the world witnessed in 2002, when terrorists using MANPADs narrowly missed bringing down a plane full of vacationers in Kenya, this weapon threatens the safety of civil aviation and can kill or injure innocent civilians.

Before I conclude, I would also like to note our support for regional efforts to improve transparency in the area of arms transfers. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States (OAS), as well as the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, have considered how to integrate aspects of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms into their respective regional reporting instruments. In particular, the OAS is to be commended for the recent entry into force of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Arms Acquisitions. The Convention imposes a legally-binding obligation on States parties to report annually on imports and exports of conventional weapons.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has played a significant role in arms transparency. It established a de facto norm of transparency in armaments. It has performed an important role in promoting accountability of political and military leaderships and has prompted many

Governments to enhance their national systems for monitoring and controlling arms transfers. Finally, the Register has even set an example for new regional initiatives, such as the OAS Convention.

Canada urges all United Nations Members States to support the Group of Governmental Experts' report recommendations. Implementing them will improve the Register and, by extension, enhance transparency regarding conventional arms holdings.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I shall be very brief. First of all, I wish to thank you, Sir, for your flexibility in allowing presentations on the report of the Group of Experts on the Register to take place this morning.

Secondly, as representative of the Netherlands, I would like warmly to congratulate Ambassador Roberto García Moritán on his successful leadership in presiding over the 2003 session of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Register. For the first time in many years, we have seen a substantive result in the expansion of some categories of the Register and we are absolutely delighted by that. I am not going to repeat here what those changes are. I am not going to say what the Netherlands is doing at the regional level to promote the Register, and I am not going to introduce my draft resolution, because I will do that on Thursday.

But once again, I want to make clear that we appreciate the broad support for the Register and the progress that the Register is undergoing. They demonstrate that the Register is alive and kicking and we will certainly give our support to future efforts to make it even more alive and kicking.

Finally, for those who have not yet sponsored our draft resolution on transparency in armaments and the Register in document A/C.1/58/L.45, the list is still here at my desk. We have more than 100 sponsors now, but everybody who still has not joined the list is more than welcome here at our desk to sign and to be included in the list of additional sponsors.

Mr. Malzahn (United States): I wish to say a few words about the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the historic results of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts on the Register.

Set up in 1992 under General Assembly resolution 46/36 L in response to the first Persian Gulf war, the Register was intended to be a confidence-building measure that would help States to pursue their security at the lowest level of armaments. Any way one looks at it, the Register is a success story. To date, some 166 United Nations Members have participated in the Register process, with annual participation as high as 126 Members. Members from every United Nations regional group participate. The Register is the foundation that several regional organizations have built on and expanded to address regional security concerns. It truly is a global confidence-building and transparency measure. It has established a de facto global norm of transparency in armaments.

However, this is not to say that the Register could not be improved. Previous groups of governmental experts in 1994, 1997 and 2000 discussed improvements to the Register by such means as expanding its scope to include not just transfers, but also military holdings and procurement through national production and adjusting the existing seven categories. Although there were lively discussions, none of these groups was able to achieve consensus on improving the Register.

However, the 2000 Group recommended a series of regional workshops on the Register with a dual purpose of raising understanding and awareness of the Register and of listening to regional security concerns to ensure that the Register continued to address the security concerns of Member States. The result of that dialogue was the point of departure for the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts.

One issue — the need to address the small arms and light weapons problem — figured prominently in every region. The 2003 Group discussed a number of ways to complement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including by adding a separate small arms and light weapons category. In the end, the Group settled on lowering the calibre for category III — "Large-calibre artillery systems" — from 100 millimetres to 75 millimetres, thereby capturing the light weapons that are most used in regional conflicts around the world.

The Group also made another change related to small arms and light weapons — it added man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) as a separate sub-category under category VII, "Missiles and missile launchers". In addition to responding to the security problems identified during the regional consultations, that change also addressed an emerging security

concern that threatens every nation: the possibility that MANPADS could be used irresponsibly to disrupt the civilian air system that binds us all together in today's interdependent world. Several recent stories in the news — the most recent of which was the attempt by terrorists to shoot down an El Al airliner — spurred the Group of Governmental Experts to action.

In addition to recommending those important substantive changes to the Register, the Group also made other recommendations aimed at improving the functioning of the Register. It recommended that the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs embrace transparency and capacity-building as a core mission and restore support for the Register that has been diverted to other missions. The Register is a success story for the United Nations and it should be supported as such.

The Group of Governmental Experts recommended that all Member States be encouraged to nominate national points of contact on the Register and that the Department for Disarmament Affairs, with the assistance of interested Member States, continue its regional workshops on the Register. With these and other recommendations, the 2003 Group sought to ensure that the Register would continue to live up to the high hopes that led to its founding and to remain relevant in addressing the security concerns that face Member States today. It will be up to future groups of governmental experts to ensure that it continues to do so in the future.

Mr. Broucher (United Kingdom): I had not intended to take the floor at this time, but, in view of the statements made by the representatives of Argentina, Japan, Canada, the Netherlands and the United States, I crave the Committee's indulgence briefly to endorse what they have already said about the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

I think that this has been extremely valuable work and the United Kingdom very much welcomes the reduced threshold for artillery systems and the inclusion for the first time of man-portable air defence systems in the Register. I would just like to add the voice of the United Kingdom to those that have welcomed the strengthening of that important global capacity-building and transparency measure. I might take the floor at greater length when the Netherlands introduces its draft resolution on Thursday.

Mr. Heinsberg (Germany): I beg your indulgence, Sir, as I too would like to join Germany's voice to those that have spoken in praise of the results of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We have actively participated in that Group and we very much welcome its results. I will also speak in greater detail on the question of the Register when we introduce our draft resolution on transparency in armaments.

The Chairman: As I indicated in my remarks at the beginning of this meeting, we will maintain a certain degree of flexibility, as in previous sessions of the First Committee. This discussion goes to show that there is readiness in the Committee to engage in a more flexible and, indeed, interactive mode.

We shall now commence the thematic discussion on the issue of nuclear weapons.

Ms. Pollack (Canada): Canada welcomes this opportunity to focus on one of the greatest challenges humankind and our planet Earth still face: nuclear weapons. We believe that this time in the thematic portion of our work provides a chance for all First Committee member States to speak to their own responsibilities regarding nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and we invite them to make forward-looking suggestions.

In our general statement, Canada reaffirmed the view that there is no substitute for the basic norms and commitments embodied in the multilateral structure whose cornerstone is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Through its legally-binding provisions, the Review Conference process and the commitment of the vast majority of its States parties, that nearly universal Treaty has enabled us to hold back the horrifying potential of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Since the end of the cold war, the numbers and types of nuclear weapons have been reduced by significant numbers. More States parties benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

We have developed equally important legal mechanisms to support and strengthen the NPT. Some, like the Additional Protocol under the International Atomic Energy Agency, have been established to keep pace with technology and to make non-proliferation safeguards more effective.

Others, like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a much wished-for fissile material cut-off treaty, promise to be effective tools to support both our disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. While we continue to work to reinforce this structure, we cannot lose sight of our objective: the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The integrity and viability of the NPT depend on continuing strong momentum in nuclear weapons reduction. There can be no going back to the nuclear arms race of the twentieth century. We encourage the nuclear-weapon States to securely reduce and dismantle their nuclear weapons arsenals in an irreversible and verifiable manner. We continue to call on those States outside the Treaty to join as non-nuclear weapon States.

The NPT is a living organism. Canada sees the NPT review process as an invaluable tool assisting the Treaty's more effective implementation that has, itself, been strengthened since 1995. One of the areas where Canada has made a contribution to the strengthened review process is in response to the practical steps for nuclear disarmament that were adopted unanimously in 2000 and specifically in the area of reporting.

We have found that reporting has a real potential to contribute to achieving the implementation of the NPT and to fostering transparency with accountability. We encourage more extensive participation in submitting reports. There is growing interest in and awareness of their role and importance, and the desire to make better use of them. Such participation is a key step on the way to creating a culture of reporting. Reporting also reinforces commitments and can spur action and provide another means to demonstrate compliance and to address and assess compliance concerns. Canada will continue to contribute to its thoughts on improving the NPT reporting requirement as we prepare for the next Preparatory Committee meeting in 2004 and we look forward to further discussions with all interested States.

Against the background of challenges to the NPT, it is more important than ever that all States parties implement fully their Treaty obligations and undertakings. Also, we must seriously reflect on how to better address such challenges as compliance and how to strengthen the Treaty's implementation. The next Preparatory Committee meeting will be a key event in shaping the decisions for the Review Conference and we look forward here, too, to working with the Chair and all States parties to have a successful meeting.

Canada has also been active in promoting the entry into force of the CTBT and participated in the most recent Conference on measures to facilitate the Treaty's entry into force. We were disappointed that more ratifying and signatory States did not actively participate, although we were encouraged that the Conference was able to adopt a Final Declaration that includes a number of concrete measures. Canada remains convinced that the test ban can only enhance international peace and security. By impeding both the development of nuclear weapons and their qualitative improvement, the CTBT combats both horizontal and vertical proliferation. It is a pillar of the NPT regime and its entry-into force is the first of the 13 practical steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons, unimaginably lethal, irremediably indiscriminate and uniquely dangerous, must never be used. The CTBT was negotiated so as to ensure that they may never be demonstrated. Over time, the test ban is calculated to chip away at the political value and sustainability of nuclear weapons, contributing inexorably to their utter elimination.

In many ways, the Treaty has already achieved "virtual" entry into force, but we have not lost sight of the goal of legal entry into force, particularly given the need to give the verification system a sound legal footing. Canada calls on the remaining 12 annex 2 countries to look to the twin objectives of the Treaty and — for their own security, as well as for that of the international community — to help make entry into force possible by ratifying.

Finally, I will use this opportunity to formally present to the First Committee the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.49, entitled "The Conference on Disarmament decision (CD/1547) of 11 August 1998 to establish, under item 1 of its agenda entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', an ad hoc committee to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

The draft resolution is identical to resolution 57/80 of 22 November 2002, adopted without a vote by

this Committee and the General Assembly. While again essentially procedural, it is anchored firmly in the expectations of the international community and reflects the widespread support for beginning these negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. It expresses determination that we might all together conclude a multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — a treaty which would be fundamental to furthering both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. In our view, which I believe is widely shared, circumstances are now favourable for agreement on a programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament next year, which we would very much welcome.

Canada is again confident that this draft resolution will be adopted without amendment and without a vote. The draft resolution remains open for co-sponsorship. We welcome all those who wish to join us in this expression of fundamental security interest.

Mr. Duarte (Brazil): I should like to introduce, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition — Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and Brazil — three draft resolutions that are contained in documents A/C.1/58/L.38, A/C.1/58/L.39 and A/C.1/58/L.40.

I shall first turn to draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.40, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: a new agenda". Like its predecessors, it is part of the effort initiated at the fifth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to engage this Committee with a view to giving new impetus to nuclear disarmament. The Final Document of the Conference fundamentally defined the context in which nuclear disarmament should be pursued. That context is the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. By the time the States parties to the NPT meet again for the sixth Review Conference in 2005, it is to be expected that effective progress will have been made on the practical steps agreed in 2000.

The sense of disappointment and of urgency so often expressed by the community of nations as a whole is even more justified today in the wake of the disturbing events that have taken place since then. Indeed, perhaps more than ever before, there is a widespread feeling that the debate on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must start producing tangible and effective results. The draft resolution seeks to reflect the grave concern at the current state of affairs in the multilateral treatment of disarmament- and non-proliferation-related matters.

With these thoughts in mind, our draft resolution in its operative paragraphs reaffirms the continued risk for humanity represented by any possibility that nuclear weapons could be used; calls upon all States parties to the NPT to pursue the full and effective implementation of the agreements reached at the 2000 Review Conference; expresses the importance and urgency of obtaining the signatures and ratifications required for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; calls for the upholding and maintenance of the moratorium on all test explosions; agrees that the further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons should be accorded a higher priority; calls for the establishment by the Conference on Disarmament without delay of an appropriate ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament, as well as for the resumption of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material and for the updating of the mandate on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to respect fully their existing commitments with regard to security assurances pending the conclusion of multilaterally negotiated legally-binding security assurances for all non-nuclear weapon States; calls upon the three States that have not yet adhered to the NPT to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States and bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements; and calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reconsider its recent announcements with a view to being in full compliance with the NPT. Finally, it stresses that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must be able to verify and ensure that nuclear facilities of States parties to the NPT are being used for peaceful purposes only, and calls upon States to cooperate fully and immediately with IAEA in resolving issues arising from the implementation of their respective obligations towards the Agency.

These selective quotations do not detract from the urgency and importance of other aspects of nuclear disarmament also addressed by the draft resolution.

May I also take this opportunity to introduce, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.39, entitled "Reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons". As I indicated in the general debate on behalf of the members of the New Agenda Coalition, we believe that the threat posed by the existence and features of non-strategic nuclear weapons is a matter of grave concern for the international community. The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the NPT ascribes to the further reduction of such weapons a priority which this draft resolution seeks to fulfil.

In reflecting those concerns, the draft resolution calls in particular for further reductions and elimination of non-strategic nuclear weapons to be included as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process; for such reductions to be carried out in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner; for preserving, reaffirming and implementing the 1991 and 1992 presidential initiatives of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics/Russian Federation; as well as for the formalization of such initiatives into legally binding instruments and for the initiation of negotiations on further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons. It also calls for further confidence-building measures.

During the informal consultations carried out by the New Agenda Coalition, we have received thus far comments and proposals for clarification or amendments that we are considering in a constructive spirit in order to achieve the widest possible support for both our draft resolutions. We remain convinced that the ideas and proposals put forth by the New Agenda Coalition since its inception can have a positive influence on international efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. The two draft resolutions that I have just introduced seek to advance and strengthen our common resolve and we ask all likeminded States to support them in the spirit of shared global concern.

I also have the honour of introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.38 on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas, on behalf of Brazil and New Zealand. Brazil has the honour of being joined by New Zealand as initiators of a text that last year gathered 160 votes in favour, and only three against. That result expresses the overwhelming acceptance of this resolution since 1996. We hope that today's draft will enjoy the same broad support.

I also wish to acknowledge that, after the draft resolution was submitted, other countries also decided to co-sponsor it. I would point out that the majority of those countries are members of the four existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

This is the eighth consecutive year that a draft resolution on this important matter has been introduced for the consideration of the First Committee. Once again, I am pleased to be able to say that the draft resolution has been updated to reflect new developments. The changes relative to resolution 57/73 reflect the ratification of the Treaty of Raratonga by the Kingdom of Tonga in December 2001, which completed the list of original members of that Treaty.

In consultation with sponsors and supporters of the initiative, Brazil and New Zealand also decided to reflect in a more precise way the current status of the process of consolidation of nuclear-free zones in the southern hemisphere. Therefore, we propose the splitting of the original operative paragraph 2 into three new paragraphs — now paragraphs 2 to 4 — which in essence keep the thrust of original paragraph 2, with necessary language adaptation.

In paragraph 2, we recognize that all original parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga have now ratified it and call upon eligible States to adhere to the Treaty and its protocols. In paragraph 3, we call upon States of the region that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty of Pelindaba, with the aim of its early entry into force. We are pleased to note that, in the 12 months since we last met, several other States have ratified the Pelindaba Treaty. Finally, in the new paragraph 4, preserving the language of the previous paragraph 2, we repeat the appeal to all concerned States to continue to work together in order to facilitate adherence to the protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties by all relevant States that have not yet done so.

The further development of nuclear-weapon-free zones in some regions is one of the most significant measures in the field of nuclear disarmament. Gradually, in various parts of the world, the nuclear option is being ruled out. Since a nuclear-weapon-free world is an aspiration of our peoples, the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons is reinforced by extending — through new nuclear-weapon-free zones — the geographical space where such weapons are illegal.

The existing regional treaties, with the addition of the Antarctic Treaty, contribute to freeing the southern hemisphere, as well as the adjacent areas north of the equator where such treaties apply, from nuclear weapons. The States parties to those treaties, in close consultation with their neighbours, renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted stringent verification commitments to that effect.

Our initiative aims at achieving recognition by the General Assembly, for the eighth consecutive year, of the progressive emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Such continuing recognition should be considered as a confirmation of the commitments of the international community to non-proliferation and disarmament. We want to reiterate that, as in previous years, our draft resolution does not create new legal obligations, nor does it contradict any norm of international law applicable to navigation, such as those contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We call upon States that have not yet done so to move towards ratification of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and their protocols.

The idea that most of the globe is nuclear-weapon-free is a powerful beacon. It adds momentum to the process of nuclear disarmament and bolsters the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Finally, we wish to put on record our appreciation for all those who voted in favour of resolution 57/73 last year. We look forward to the renewal of that support from all those States committed to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Stephens (Australia): The proliferation of nuclear weapons remains one of the most serious challenges to global peace and security. Australia, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, is therefore strongly committed to efforts seeking to curb the spread of such weapons and to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

We meet at a time of serious challenge to the system of international treaties developed as a key defence against the spread of nuclear weapons. Over the past year, North Korea has been found by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to be in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and has announced its withdrawal from the Treaty. Serious unresolved concerns exist about the nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

We should be clear about what is at stake. The non-proliferation regime provides vital security benefits; but, more than this, dealing with nuclear proliferation is fundamental to the goal of nuclear disarmament. It is not possible to conceive of a world free of nuclear weapons in the absence of complete and permanent assurances of nuclear non-proliferation.

Australia welcomed the commitments given at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the constructive outcomes of the first and second Preparatory Committee sessions for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. At next year's third Preparatory Committee session and at the Review Conference in 2005, the interests of all NPT parties rest in working cooperatively to meet the challenges faced by the Treaty.

Australia welcomes and is pleased to co-sponsor Japan's draft resolution on a path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We particularly welcome those paragraphs in the draft resolution that give expression to the outcomes from the NPT 2000 Review Conference and that underscore the importance of their full implementation. We hope that the draft resolution will again attract wide cross-group support, including from the nuclear-weapon States.

Australia firmly believes that progress on nuclear disarmament is supported by steps all States can take to reinforce non-proliferation and disarmament goals. All parties to the NPT share a responsibility to respect and strengthen the Treaty's verification mechanism — the IAEA safeguards system. Australia considers the Agency's strengthened safeguards system — the Additional Protocol — to be the current standard for NPT safeguards in non-nuclear-weapon States. We would like to see the Additional Protocol come quickly to be an essential pre-requisite for nuclear supply.

Australia strongly supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and is actively pursuing an ongoing programme to secure further signatures and ratifications. We welcome reaffirmation by the September 2003 article XIV Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT of the essential role of the CTBT in strengthening global peace and security. And, while it is yet to enter into force, the CTBT has already made a powerful contribution to non-proliferation and disarmament. With 169 signatures and 106 ratifications, the Treaty is a clear expression of the international community's

collective will to halt nuclear-weapon test explosions. In that respect, Australia is pleased to be lead co-sponsor, with New Zealand and Mexico, and to introduce to the Committee the draft resolution on the CTBT, contained in document A/C.1/58/L.52. We are confident that the draft resolution will again attract wide support and invite delegations that have not yet done so to co-sponsor it.

The international community has long identified the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) as an urgent disarmament and non-proliferation step. Yet, despite having been repeatedly endorsed by States present here, FMCT negotiations have yet to commence. Australia therefore welcomes the tabling by Canada of the draft resolution on the FMCT. We very much hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Australia looks forward to joining with other delegations in the course of this session of the First Committee in supporting draft resolutions that make a useful, practical contribution to our collective efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Caughley (New Zealand): I wish to take the floor as co-sponsor of four draft resolutions that have been referred to in interventions made so far this morning. They are contained in documents A/C.1/58/L.52, A/C.1/58/L.38, A/C.1/58/L.39 and A/C.1/58/L.40.

As a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.52, just introduced by the representative of Australia, New Zealand has long been outspoken against nuclear testing. We welcomed the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and ratified it in March 1999. That Treaty is a central instrument for the prohibition of all nuclear explosions and testing of nuclear weapons. Even before the conclusion of the CTBT, the Antarctic Treaty of 1959, followed by treaties in 1963 and 1967 governing conduct in the atmosphere and outer space, effectively prohibited nuclear testing. An essential element of the early treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Pacific and Latin America — the Treaty of Rarotonga of 1985 and the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967 — was their prohibition of nuclear-weapons testing.

The value of the international norm prohibiting nuclear testing lies not only in its importance to ending the nuclear arms race, creating a more secure and peaceful world, and preventing death and destruction to mankind and the environment. It is also an essential component of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime, the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The NPT was extended indefinitely in 1995, largely on the basis of the renewed commitment by the major nuclear-weapons Powers to completing the CTBT and to pursuing other article VI objectives.

At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, States parties agreed on the importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions, to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and also called on States, pending the entry into force, to act so as not to defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty.

There was widespread international reaction when India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in 1998. On 6 June 1998, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1172 (1998), which sternly criticized the actions of those two States and called on all States to respect the norm against nuclear testing that had been formalized by the CTBT. The Council clearly perceived that a no-testing norm was in effect for all States because its violation would jeopardize the non-proliferation regime and threaten international peace and security, the Council's most important responsibility. To reinforce the importance of the CTBT and the norm that it enshrines, 18 foreign ministers issued a statement at the United Nations in September 2002. Fifty Governments have since endorsed that statement.

It is an issue of deep concern to the Government of New Zealand that the CTBT has not yet entered into force. A fully operational CTBT would be the first line of defence against the resumption of nuclear testing and, as such, a fundamental contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The current security environment continues to offer challenges to the established norm against nuclear testing. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear posturing and continued nuclear instability in South Asia are both potentially destabilizing influences on the existing moratorium.

The near universal adherence to the NPT, the widespread and hostile reaction of the international community to the events of 1998 and the call by the overwhelming majority of States for the early entry

into force of the CTBT serve as clear proof of the strength of the international norm against nuclear testing. To act in contravention of that norm and the CTBT would undermine international security and may possibly initiate a further arms race.

New Zealand strongly urges all States that have not yet done so, and in particular the remaining annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. In the meantime, the onus is clearly on the nuclear-weapon States to fully respect the moratorium on nuclear testing and honour their commitments under the NPT regime. We believe that any move by the United States or any other nuclear-weapon State towards enhancing nuclear testing capabilities would be a retrograde development. We fear that any move that destabilizes the current norm against testing would send a dangerous message of comfort to potential proliferators.

New Zealand is once again honoured to work with Brazil on the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas". In the southern hemisphere, denuclearization commands wide support. The Treaty of Rarotonga for the South Pacific, the Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America, the Treaty of Bangkok for South-East Asia, the Treaty of Pelindaba for Africa and the Antarctic Treaty all contribute to transforming the greater part of the territory of the southern hemisphere into an area designated as nuclear-weapon free. In terms of New Zealand's own neighbourhood, the Pacific, there remains a strong commitment to a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons. Last year we welcomed, Tonga's ratification of the Treaty of Rarotonga, which completed ratification by the original States party to that Treaty.

It has been to our disappointment that, in previous years, this text has not achieved consensus and that certain States oppose it on the grounds of concerns regarding maritime rights of free passage on the high seas. New Zealand has been and remains a strong supporter of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and fully respects the rights that all States parties enjoy under that Convention, including the freedom of navigation on the high seas. Moreover, the draft resolution in its preamble specifically recalls the applicable principles and rules of international law relating to the freedom of the high seas and the rights of passage through maritime spaces, including those set out in UNCLOS. New Zealand, as a State that is firmly and legally committed to UNCLOS, rejects the implication that it has interpreted selectively that Convention for the pursuit of this draft resolution.

During this year's session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference in May, we were asked what the value would be of an initiative for a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere if it did not affect the freedom of the high seas and the rights of passage through maritime space. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are largely non-proliferation measures, but they also promote disarmament by providing an incentive for nuclear-armed or aspiring States to pursue the nuclear-free path.

At a time when there are increasing concerns regarding nuclear proliferation, a proposal that would strengthen the barrier to any future risk of proliferation in the southern hemisphere should surely be welcomed. The draft resolution represents one step towards harnessing the common vision of zone members and pulling the net more tightly against the spread of nuclear weapons.

Finally, I align New Zealand with the statement made earlier by the representative of Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda when introducing draft resolutions A/C.1/58/L.39 and A/C.1/58/L.40.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish): It is my pleasure to introduce the initiatives that the Government of Mexico will be promoting in the First Committee.

The Government of Mexico is convinced that the mere existence of nuclear weapons is a serious threat to the security of humankind and that preventing nuclear proliferation is an urgent task for the international community that cannot be postponed. The Millennium Summit welcomed the proposal to convene a United Nations conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. The recommendations made by the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters in its report issued on 25 September 2001 in document A/56/400 also include a reference to the importance of such a conference.

Mexico continues to be convinced of the validity of that initiative and its objectives. My delegation will continue to work on behalf of that proposal. That is why we are introducing today a draft decision contained in document A/C.1/58/L.2, entitled "United

Nations conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in the context of nuclear disarmament", under agenda item 73 (z).

The delegation of Mexico is also honoured to introduce, on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.6, entitled "Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)", under agenda item 66.

By this draft, the General Assembly would share the pleasure of Latin American and Caribbean countries over the consolidation of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone established in a densely populated region by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and over the fact that this legal instrument is in full effect in the 33 sovereign States of the region. All of the States parties to the Treaty have sponsored the draft resolution, which is why I took such pleasure in reading out their names one by one.

In its operative part, the draft resolution would welcome the full effectiveness of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in all the States of the region. It would also urge the countries of the region that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification of the amendments to the Treaty of Tlatelolco approved by the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in its resolutions 267 (E-V), 268 (XII) and 290 (E-VII).

Now that the full effectiveness of the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been achieved, and having initiated the process of consolidating the regime banning nuclear weapons in the region, we have decided to biennialize the item by placing it on the provisional agenda of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I would therefore ask the Secretariat to take note of the need to correct paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, in which the reference to the fifty-ninth session should now read "sixtieth session".

We hope that the draft resolution will receive, as in past years, the full support of the First Committee and be adopted without a vote.

In line with our desire to promote nuclear-weapon-free zones, my delegation also wishes to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.19 on the convening of a conference of States parties and signatories to treaties by which nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established. The objectives of the conference, as reflected in the draft resolution, are to enhance dialogue and cooperation among zones and to share experiences with a view to promoting greater agreement and to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): I have asked for the floor to introduce a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", contained in document A/C.1/58/L.53.

I should like to thank the delegations of Australia, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Italy, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland and Ukraine for co-sponsoring the draft resolution. It is our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted with the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States, in the same manner as last year.

As the only country in the world ever to have experienced nuclear devastation, Japan as a nation fervently desires to realize a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons. It is our firm conviction that this aim can be achieved only by taking concrete and realistic steps for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The draft resolution represents that strong desire of the Japanese people in this regard and outlines a path towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which comprises a series of specific, incremental nuclear disarmament steps.

The 2000 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed on 13 practical steps and it is essential to implement those steps. We believe that the Final Document of the Review Conference retains its relevance for world security, despite the sea change that has taken place since then, and have therefore relied heavily on it in drafting the present text. The draft resolution incorporates many elements that are contained in the 2000 Final Document or were developed from the ideas in it. In this connection, I would like to reaffirm our understanding that an

unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals was given at the 2000 Review Conference by the nuclear-weapon States.

Now, let me explain some of the important points in the draft resolution.

First of all, paragraph 3 (a) calls for the signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), building upon the meaningful Final Declaration adopted at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, convened in September 2003 in Vienna. This is a step of the utmost importance for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its significance is not in the least reduced by the moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions.

Secondly, paragraph 3 (b) calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) during the 2004 session of the Conference on Disarmament. The FMCT is a priority for Japan as the next logical step in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The draft resolution also calls for a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, paragraph 3 (f) calls upon the two largest nuclear Powers to proceed with deep reductions in their strategic offensive arsenals with a view to maintaining and strengthening strategic stability and international security. The draft resolution also recognizes in paragraph 4 that the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons will require further steps, including deeper reductions by all the nuclear-weapon States.

Fourthly, we have introduced a new fourth preambular paragraph that reaffirms the universal concept that every effort should be made to avoid nuclear devastation. No one can deny that simple idea, which should be consistently recalled, bearing in mind all the damage suffered in the aftermath of nuclear bombing.

Last but not least, this year's draft resolution reflects new elements in the current international security landscape. The new third and sixth preambular paragraphs place particular emphasis on the concern over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and on the importance of full compliance with the NPT. We have also strengthened the fifteenth preambular paragraph, which deals with the prevention of nuclear terrorism by making a reference to the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in that area. The draft resolution contains several other important elements, including the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system in order to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Now, I should like to reiterate my strong hope that the draft resolution will be adopted with overwhelming support. I also ask interested States to co-sponsor our draft resolution.

Mr. Razzoq (Uzbekistan): On behalf of the five Central Asian States — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — I would like to introduce the draft decision on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, which is contained in document A/C.1/58/L.14.

Several General Assembly resolutions and decisions have been adopted since the inception of the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. By adopting those documents by consensus, the international community has indicated its unequivocal support for that breakthrough proposal. We thank the delegations that voiced their support for the establishment of the zone during the general debate.

For almost five years since the adoption of the first General Assembly resolution on this issue, the States of the region have been able to work out a draft treaty on the establishment of the zone and a protocol on negative security assurances by nuclear-weapon States. We thank the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations, and in particular the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, for their valuable support in our work with those documents.

For the time being, the States of the region are in the midst of consultations with nuclear-weapon States on those drafts. We very much hope that the Central Asian and nuclear-weapon States will find an appropriate compromise that will make the creation of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone a possibility. Uzbekistan will certainly do its best in that regard.

Taking into consideration the continuing consultations and the need to keep this issue on our agenda, the delegation of Uzbekistan, on behalf of all five Central Asian States, is pleased to submit for the Committee's attention the draft decision before it. On behalf of the five countries, allow me to express our

sincere hope that this draft decision will enjoy the support of all delegations and be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Lundemo (Norway): Norway considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) a cornerstone of our collective security. It has provided security benefits for more than three decades. We are therefore concerned that the Treaty is under stress. It is essential to preserve and strengthen the authority and integrity of the NPT. The Review Conference in 2005 is essential in that respect.

We should aim for a balanced outcome of the current review cycle. It is important that the 2005 Conference further reinforce the non-proliferation norm through strengthened safeguards. Any nation seeking nuclear technology for peaceful programmes must be obliged to implement the International Atomic Energy Agency Additional Protocol to the comprehensive safeguards. Safeguards and compliance are closely interlinked.

At the same time, it is essential that the 2005 Conference lead to further progress on the disarmament agenda. We welcome the Moscow Treaty as a substantial contribution to the reduction in strategic arsenals, but we must advance further, and Norway reiterates its call for irreversible reductions in nuclear weapons, including non-strategic weapons.

Norway has on a number of occasions called for the entry-into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call upon all States that have not ratified that instrument to do so without further delay. Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, it is important that the current moratoriums on tests remain. Such self-imposed moratoriums cannot, however, replace the legally-binding commitments represented by the signing and ratification of the CTBT. We must preserve the integrity of the norms set by the CTBT. Norway has co-sponsored this year's CTBT draft resolution.

The last NPT Review Conference called for a commencement of negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT). Norway shares the broad international agreement that the FMCT is the next logical step on our multilateral disarmament agenda. We welcome the existing moratoriums declared by some nuclear-weapon States, but a legally-binding prohibition provides the best guarantee against the future production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. Norway has therefore co-sponsored the draft resolution submitted by Canada.

Mr. Durrani (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor this morning to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.8, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Sudan, and my own delegation.

The provision of security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States is an obligation which arises from the United Nations Charter. The Charter obligates Member States not to use or threaten to use force. That obligation extends to the non-use of and non-threat of use of any weapons, including nuclear weapons. Indeed, that fact was underlined by the resolution that the General Assembly adopted at its first session, which outlawed nuclear weapons.

The demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear weapon States in the 1960s and it crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The response of the nuclear-weapon States, reflected in Security Council resolution 255 (1968), was considered to be grossly inadequate by the non-nuclear weapon States.

At the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, agreement was reached on the conclusion of an international instrument that would provide binding and credible negative security assurances to the non-nuclear weapon States. However, the declarations made by four of the five nuclear-weapon States at that special session and, later, at the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, and reflected in Security Council resolution 984 (1995), were also considered insufficient, qualified and partial by most of the non-nuclear weapon States.

At the end of the cold war, there was a general expectation that it would become easier for the nuclear-weapon States to extend negative security assurances to the non-nuclear weapon States. Unfortunately, the situation, instead of becoming easier, has become more complex, and this is so for several reasons.

First, with the indefinite extension of the NPT, most nuclear-weapon States have presumed the

permanent right to retain nuclear weapons. Secondly, the commitment in article VI of the NPT to complete nuclear disarmament has remained open-ended, even after the widely-welcomed commitment made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Thirdly, the geographic scope for the use of nuclear weapons has also expanded with the expansion of nuclear alliances and the operationalization of provisions for sharing nuclear weapons and command and control among alliance members. Fourthly, one major nuclear-weapon State that formerly adhered to the principle of non-first use of nuclear weapons has now disavowed that principle and adopted the posture of first use of nuclear weapons. Fifthly, new doctrines of possible use of nuclear weapons, contrary to Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), have been propounded, for example, in warning of the use of nuclear weapons against the use or threat of use of biological and chemical weapons, the use of nuclear weapons against terrorism, and the development of "mini-nukes" for actual battlefield use. Finally, two additional nuclear-armed States have emerged on the world scene, and there is one other presumed nuclear-armed State whose status and obligations remain unclear.

Under the circumstances, the conclusion of credible negative security assurances to the non-nuclear weapon States has gained greater urgency. The sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.8 seek to underline and to operationalize that sense of urgency.

The draft resolution is similar to the ones adopted at previous sessions by this Committee. It reaffirms the urgent need to reach an early agreement on effective international arrangements on negative security assurances. It notes with satisfaction that there is no objection, in principle, to the idea of an international convention on this subject. It appeals to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to work towards an early agreement and it recommends further intensification of efforts to evolve a common approach and a common formula on this issue. Finally, it recommends that the Conference on Disarmament actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement on negative security assurances.

The sponsors believe that the conclusion of effective arrangements on negative security assurances could constitute a major confidence-building measure in the current tense international circumstances between the nuclear- and non-nuclear weapon States, as well as among the nuclear-weapon States. Secondly, it could contribute to reducing the nuclear danger. It could also ease the threats which arise from new doctrines of nuclear use and, over all, facilitate the negotiations on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

My delegation and the co-sponsors therefore urge the adoption of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/58/L.8 by widest possible majority.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): I have asked for the floor to speak on behalf of the African Group on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first devoted to disarmament, when Member States agreed that nuclear weapons posed the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization. Today, weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, remain an issue of grave concern to the international community. The need to implement disarmament and non-proliferation measures continues to be a major challenge in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind. The most effective means of achieving nuclear disarmament should therefore be the commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and on their total elimination. Among the first steps towards the realization of that objective should be a commitment by nuclear-weapon States to immediately stop the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which the nuclear-weapon States will undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any nuclear disarmament process be irreversible, transparent and verifiable in order to be meaningful.

In that regard, the African Group reiterates the resolve expressed at the Millennium Summit by heads of State or Government on 8 September 2000, as contained in the Millennium Declaration, to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving that aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear danger.

The African Group recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was a turning point in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group once again wishes to express its regret at the non-implementation of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament 25 years after its adoption. The African Group wishes to stress the need to convene the fourth special session on disarmament in order to give real meaning to the nuclear disarmament process.

The African Group reaffirms its belief in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a vital instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Group endorses the practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT on systematic and progressive efforts to implement the unequivocal commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI.

In line with the final document of the thirteenth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 25 February this year, the African Group reiterates its long-standing position in favour of the total elimination of all nuclear-weapons testing. The Group stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, among other things, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Group reiterates that, if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully realized, the greater commitment to nuclear disarmament of all States signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, is essential. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is important that the moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device be maintained.

The African Group takes note of the completion of the ratification process of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions — the Moscow Treaty — by the Russian Federation and the United States of America on 1 June 2003 as a positive step towards nuclear disarmament. The Group, however, wishes to express its belief in the view shared by the Non-Aligned Movement that reduction in deployments and in operational status cannot substitute for irreversible cuts in and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The African Group wishes to emphasize the importance of strengthening the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements by ensuring full compliance, effective implementation of their provisions and their universality. The Group also expresses its belief in strengthening the existing disarmament machinery in order to advance the process of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the Group expresses regret that, for yet another year, the Conference on Disarmament failed both to establish a subsidiary body to deal with the issue of nuclear disarmament and to commence negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, as agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We express the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will begin its substantive work as soon as possible.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): Under the thematic issues on nuclear disarmament, allow me to share my delegation's views.

The First Committee has, to its credit, adopted a number of resolutions pertaining to nuclear disarmament, particularly in the context of a genuine need to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and thereby facilitate the process of their total abolition. Various interim measures have been identified, such as stemming qualitative improvements, de-alerting and deactivating nuclear weapons, reducing the operational status of their systems, affirming no-first use of those weapons, and adopting security assurances in a legally binding instrument.

Needless to say, those resolutions have remained unimplemented; hence, the imperative need to retain those issues on our agenda. It is undeniable that the First Committee, in common with other multilateral disarmament machinery, has recently had to face some

difficult times. There is lack of agreement concerning its agenda items dealing with nuclear and related issues. Yet, its deliberative function has become all the more important to sustain, especially at a time when the future of multilateralism has come to be increasingly challenged in the context of retreat from nuclear disarmament. We must persist in our efforts to reach common understanding on this issue of critical importance to all Member States.

Despite their central importance for systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it is self-evident that no progress has been made in implementing the 13 steps agreed in 2000. There has been little shift in the position of nuclear-weapon States. In consequence, there is pessimism and the future looks bleak. Those steps are tantamount to nothing without the political will to implement them.

The Chairman: The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind him that the Committee will follow the procedure that I have outlined at previous meetings.

I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to respond to statements made by some delegations referring to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear activities.

They expressed their unilateral and one-sided attitude towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, closing their eyes to the United States nuclear threats against my country. My delegation has on several occasions clarified its position that it was entirely due to the United States hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the nuclear issue surfaced between my country and the United States and reached its worst phase ever. Therefore, it is not in line with reality for some countries to talk about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear activities, failing to see the essence of the nuclear issue and turning a blind eye to the United States invariably hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea expects that all countries that refer to the nuclear issue will come to see clearly the substance of the nuclear issue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and seek a fair and impartial approach to resolving the issue.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have joined the sponsors of the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/58/L.1: Canada, Costa Rica, Fiji, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Solomon Islands and Ukraine; A/C.1/58/L.10: Germany; A/C.1/58/L.21: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; A/C.1/58/L.32: Ukraine; A/C.1/58/L.34: Fiji; A/C.1/58/L.35: Fiji; A/C.1/58/L.38: Mongolia; A/C.1/58/L.43: Fiji and Papua New Guinea; A/C.1/58/L.45: Armenia and Papua New Guinea; A/C.1/58/L.49: Estonia and Venezuela; A/C.1/58/L.50: Fiji, Mongolia and Ukraine; A/C.1/58/L.51: Germany; A/C.1/58/L.52: Ukraine; and A/C.1/58/L.53: Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Ukraine.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Viet Nam.

Mrs. Pham Thi Nga (Viet Nam): I would like to draw the Committee's special attention to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.43.

There is a serious mistake in the list of sponsors of the draft resolution. Viet Nam is not a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, because we find that it remains discriminatory and imbalanced. I just want to make it clear that Viet Nam is not a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.43.

The Chairman: The document will be reissued for technical reasons with the due correction.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.